

SUMMARY of PROCEEDINGS



JOINT CORPORATIONS, ELECTIONS & POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE MEETING INFORMATION

August 14-15, 2025 | 8:30 AM
Thyra Thomson State Office Building, Round House Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room 3024
444 W Collins Drive
Casper, Wyoming

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Cale Case, Co-chairman
Representative Christopher Knapp, Co-chairman
Senator Brian Boner
Senator Dan Dockstader
Senator Bill Landen
Senator Cheri Steinmetz
Representative Gary Brown
Representative Paul Hoeft
Representative Steve Johnson
Representative Tony Locke
Representative Ann Lucas
Representative Joe Webb
Representative Nina Webber
Representative Mike Yin

LEGISLATIVE SERVICE OFFICE STAFF

Josh Anderson, Senior Legislative Attorney
Katie Talbott, Legislative Editor/House Chief Clerk
Jessie Schaeffer, Research Analyst

OTHERS PRESENT AT MEETING

Please refer to [Appendix 1-02](#) to review the Committee Sign-in Sheet for a list of other individuals who attended the meeting.

The Committee Meeting Summary of Proceedings (meeting minutes) is prepared by the Legislative Service Office (LSO) and is the official record of the proceedings of a legislative committee meeting. This document does not represent a transcript of the meeting; it is a digest of the meeting and provides a record of official actions taken by the Committee. All meeting materials and handouts provided to the Committee by the Legislative Service Office, public officials, lobbyists, and the public are on file at the Legislative Service Office and are part of the official record of the meeting. An index of these materials is provided at the end of this document and these materials are on file at the Legislative Service Office. For more information or to review meeting materials, please contact the Legislative Service Office at (307) 777-7881 or by e-mail at lso@wyoleg.gov. The Summary of Proceedings for each legislative committee meeting can be found on the Wyoming Legislature's website at www.wyoleg.gov.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Joint Corporations, Elections and Political Subdivisions Interim Committee (Committee) met for two days in Casper. The Committee heard testimony and received stakeholders on updates from the Electricity Working Group. They further considered public records and public meetings, housing strategy updates from the Wyoming Community Development Authority, 911 Task Force updates and uniform mortgage modification act draft legislation from the Uniform Law Commission. The Committee reviewed multiple draft bills related to elections and discussed proposed regulatory sandboxes. The next Committee meeting is scheduled for November 3-4, 2025, in Cheyenne.

The Committee voted to sponsor the following bills, as amended, during the 2026 Budget Session:

- 26LSO-0040.2 Pen and paper ballots
- 26LSO-0041.2 Ballot drop boxes-prohibition
- 26LSO-0050.3 Elections-voter registration revisions

CALL TO ORDER (AUGUST 14, 2025)

Co-Chairman Case called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. The following sections summarize the Committee proceedings by topic. Please refer to [Appendix 1-01](#) to review the Committee Meeting Agenda. The meeting can be viewed on YouTube – Joint Corporations, Elections and Political Subdivisions, August 14, 2025, [AM](#), [PM](#), and August 15, 2025, [AM](#), [PM](#).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Meeting minutes from the May 8-9, 2025, Committee meeting were approved without changes.

ENERGY AUTHORITY - ELECTRICITY WORKING GROUP UPDATE

Wyoming Energy Authority, Rob Creager

Rob Creager, Wyoming Energy Authority (WEA), introduced John Jenks, Director of Energy Market Development, who presented slides consisting of three policy areas WEA is focused on, including certificated territory integrity, serving large loads, and third-party generation. Mr. Jenks also provided an update on the work the WEA has completed to date through stakeholder engagement. Kara Forstrom, Contractor, provided further information on the three WEA-focused policy areas and outlined draft proposals for state standardization, referencing [Appendix 2-01](#) as an option that was not adopted by Wyoming stakeholders. Ms. Forstrom ended the presentation stating that additional discussions are warranted.

Public Service Commission

Chris Petrie, Deputy Chairman, Public Service Commission (PSC), and John Burbridge, Chief Counsel, PSC, provided an overview of the purpose of the Public Service Commission. The PSC's mission is to ensure uninterrupted power is provided to Wyoming and to require utilities that have a monopoly over a territory to provide adequate services in that territory by simulating the benefits of competition and ensuring costs are allocated to different types of customers based on customer usage. Mr. Petrie provided an update on activities including rulemaking through stakeholder engagement and public comment using statutory authority at W.S. 37-1-101. Mr. Petrie also discussed meetings with utilities regarding how large loads are dealt with, limitations, and whether any changes are necessary to their procedures or tariffs.

Office of Consumer Advocate

Anthony Ornelas, Office of the Consumer Advocate (OCA), provided perspective on industrial loads and background of the OCA to advocate for all customers of utilities in the state in all classes. The OCA's goal

is to ensure that with increasing loads, current customers do not see rate increases or cost shifting based on that growth. Mr. Ornelas stated that the OCA currently has statutory authority to conduct activities meeting the OCA's goals. Mr. Ornelas referenced many points discussed by the WEA including third-party generation and their viability. The OCA has been involved with data centers since 2016.

Stakeholders

Cindy Delancey and Thor Nelson, Holland and Hart, representing Wyoming Industrial Energy Consumers (WIEC), provided an overview of WIEC and its involvement in electricity issues. Mr. Nelson provided context on data centers contracting with entities to construct power plants to provide power solely to the data center, which falls into a regulatory gray area due to the potential that a power plant of this type being considered as a public utility and therefore obligated to provide service to the entire territory. Mr. Nelson noted that Idaho is an example of a state that authorizes that type of electricity generation structure. WIEC continues to work with other stakeholders and regulators.

Bill Winney, Sublette County resident, provided an example of offshore power pertaining to the issue of connecting power plants into the grid.

Jody Levin, Wyoming Mining Association, described issues with capacity in certain areas of the state, resulting in delay of projects or requiring mining projects to pivot entirely. Ms. Levin also stated that electricity is the second largest cost for mining operations and supports third-party generation being limited to industrial customers and solutions must be offered for current industries within the state.

Shawn Taylor, Wyoming Rural Electric Association (WREA), began his comments by clarifying that these co-ops are owned by the customers and questioned how a third-party would be able to come into Wyoming with one or two customers and not be considered a public utility. Mr. Taylor suggested industries could partner with utilities to meet industry goals as well as consideration for incoming industries engaging with a rural co-op to discuss housing and infrastructure.

Oscar Rodemaker, Tri-State Generation, commented on the appreciation of being included in the process and provided an update on a tariff.

Thom Carter, Rocky Mountain Power (RMP), commented on the difficulty of finding solutions with a large group of disparate voices and the goal of keeping current customers at the front of their minds. Mr. Carter stated that large loads are a new issue for all states. Mr. Carter outlined the classifications of customers and the differing input from each classification makes it difficult for utilities to respond universally. Mr. Carter stated there is a need for more consideration for special contracts to ensure the expense follows the provider and how to better explain the effects to all customers.

David Bush, Black Hills Energy (BHE) and Cheyenne Light Fuel and Power (CLFP), commented on data centers and how Cheyenne has become a hub for those data centers. He highlighted that the goal is to protect current customers through separation from new customers. Mr. Bush referenced recent legislation related to tariff fixes and provided examples of blockchain infrastructure customers and how their service is interruptible, does not affect other customers' service and allows current customers to receive credit from the blockchain industry. Mr. Bush also stated there is a tax benefit and other benefits including job creation that comes from data centers. Mr. Bush also stated that deregulated states end up being more expensive for customers than states with regulation.

Public Comment

The following people provided comments:

- Rozmaring Czaban, Natrona County
- Tom Lacock, Associate State Director, AARP Wyoming

PUBLIC RECORDS FOLLOW-UP AND OPEN MEETINGS

Jessie Schaeffer, Research Analyst, Legislative Service Office (LSO), provided an overview of two research products on public records and open meetings. ([Appendix 3-01](#)) and ([Appendix 3-04](#)).

26LSO-0051 - Public records act revisions

Josh Anderson, Senior Staff Attorney, LSO, presented a bill draft: 26LSO-0051 - Public records act revisions ([Appendix 3-02](#)), which would revise time periods for acknowledgement of public records requests and release of public records; provide for an extension of time to release public records; authorize the ombudsman to refer a matter to the attorney general or district attorney; specify fees for public records; increase a penalty; authorize attorney fees and provide for an effective date.

Darlena Potter, Wyoming Public Records Ombudsman, provided comments regarding the balance between entities and members of the public and noted that depending on the entity, some records are readily available where others are still operating on paper and may need more time to fulfill a request, ([Appendix 3-03](#)). Ms. Potter highlighted some of the difficulties with few staff members and increased records requests. Ms. Potter stated that she has increased the number of training sessions with entities, so they know what they are responsible for and what members of the public expect of entities. Ms. Potter noted some concerns with timelines included in the bill draft based on entities' abilities and different mediums used for records. Ms. Potter commented on the importance of standard fees and overlap with public notices that eventually become public records.

Public Comment

The following people provided comments:

- Victor Miller, Cheyenne
- Rod Miller, Cheyenne
- Chairman Case read remarks from Sandy Ress, Jackson
- Leah Juarez, Mayor of Mills
- Bill Winney, Sublette County
- Ross Schriftman, Casper
- Ashley Harpstreith, Executive Director, Wyoming Association of Municipalities (WAM)
- Matt Murdock, Pinedale
- Kyle Butterfield, Riverton
- Janine Jordan, Laramie
- Mike Smith and Tara Evans, University of Wyoming (UW)
- Joey Correnti, Rural Wyoming Matters
- Patrick Collins, Mayor of Cheyenne
- Rozmaring Czaban, Casper
- Brian Farmer, Wyoming School Boards Association
- Bob Bonnar, Newcastle News Letter Journal
- Tom Lubnau, Gillette ([Appendix 3-06](#))
- Mark Koep, Crook County
- Sarah Squires, Managing Editor of several newspapers and radio

Committee Action

The Committee voted to create a working group of legislators and stakeholders, to be chaired by Darlena Potter, the Public Records Ombudsman, to bring about meaningful changes to the Wyoming Public Records Act (WPRA). The Committee may reconsider the bill following the working group's discussions.

26LSO-0052-Public records act applicability to local government associations

Josh Anderson, LSO, presented a draft bill: 26LSO-0052-Public records act applicability to local government associations ([Appendix 3-05](#)) which would specify that local government associations are subject to public records and public meetings requirements.

Public Comment

The following people provided comments:

- Bob Bonnar, Newcastle News Letter Journal
- Joey Correnti, Vice Chairman of the Carbon County Republican Party
- Matt Murdock, WAM President and Mayor of Pinedale
- Ashley Harpstreith, WAM
- Representative Brady, House District 60
- Mark Koep, Crook County resident
- Karl Allred, Evanston resident
- Jill Kaufman, Wheatland resident

Committee Action

The Committee took no action on 26LSO-0052-Public records act applicability to local government associations.

HOUSING

Scott Hoversland, Executive Director, Wyoming Community Development Authority (WCDA), and Matt Hall representing WAM, provided an overview of the WCDA Housing Needs Assessment Plan ([Appendix 5-01](#)), which showed that housing affordability has declined. The goal of the Needs Assessment Plan was to find ways to increase housing affordability, ensure adequate housing supply, balance workforce housing needs, and increase efficiency of limited resources and infrastructure.

Public Comment

The following people provided comments:

- Patrick Collins, Mayor of Cheyenne
- Renny McKay, Wyoming Business Alliance

911 TASK FORCE - UPDATE

Nate Smolinski, Wyoming Department of Transportation (WyDOT), asked to continue the discussion concerning the 911 Task Force during the Committee's November 3-4, 2025, meeting. Mr. Smolinski indicated a legislative request could be forthcoming to amend W.S. 9-2-1104 to provide a budget and budgetary authority to the Public Safety Communications Commission in order to help migrate toward Next Generation 911 (NG911), a statewide initiative to upgrade the state's emergency 911 system from legacy technology to an internet-based infrastructure.

Matt Johnson, Chief of Police, Torrington, Wyoming provided a local perspective concerning the lack of funding for the current program let alone future enhancements. Chief Johnson spoke in support of a

concept brought by Senator Steinmetz to increase 911 fees for phone customers to help cover the costs of 911 programs. The 75 cent user fee was implemented in 1986 and adjusting for inflation it would be approximately \$2.20 today. The fee is imposed by county commissioners and could be assessed county by county.

Public Comment

The following people provided comments:

- Jody Levin, representing Charter and Verizon
- Katharine Wilkinson, representing All West and Silver Star Communications
- Tim Kunkleman, representing Lumen and CenturyLink
- Jerimiah Rieman, Wyoming County Commissioners Association (WCCA)

Committee Action

The Committee voted to request a bill draft that would provide grant money to counties to fund 911 programs.

UNIFORM LAW COMMISSION - UNIFORM MORTGAGE MODIFICATIONS ACT

Scott Meier, speaking as a Uniform Law Commissioner (ULC) reviewed 26LSO-0150 – Uniform mortgage modification act ([Appendix 7-01](#)). The bill draft would specify the priority of mortgages, applicability of the Uniform Mortgage Modification Act and provide for an effective date. Mr. Meier outlined how the process would work to modify a mortgage and its effects on lowering transaction costs.

Mr. Meier, also speaking on behalf of the Wyoming Bankers' Association spoke in favor of the bill, and suggested an amendment.

Committee Action

The Committee voted to consider the bill at its November meeting with the suggested amendment to add a new provision under W.S. 34-30-105 to specify that “this act is not to be construed as to negate the validity of priority of a mortgage modification not described in W.S. 34-30-104(b).”

ELECTED OFFICIAL ASSOCIATIONS

The Committee discussed whether any member was interested in moving 2021 SF 144 – Public funds-lobbying forward and whether the Committee received enough public comment on the bill during the discussion on 26LSO-0052-Public records act applicability to local government associations to make a decision. The Committee determined that any member who was interested could bring the bill as an individual bill. The Committee will revisit this topic at their meeting in November.

DAY ONE RECESS

The Committee recessed at 7:10 p.m.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 15, 2025

CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chairman Knapp called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

The Committee voted to request a bill draft based on 2021 SF 144 – Public funds-lobbying.

ELECTIONS

Legislative Service Office

Josh Anderson, LSO, presented the following bill drafts:

26LSO-0040 - Pen and paper ballots, which would require counties to use pan and paper as the default method to mark ballots for elections in Wyoming. ([Appendix 11-01](#)).

26LSO-0041 – Ballot drop boxes – prohibition, which would prohibit the use of drop boxes for the delivery of ballots in Wyoming. ([Appendix 11-02](#)).

26LSO-0042 – Ballot harvesting – prohibition, which would prohibit a person from delivering ballots of other electors to the county clerk, that ballots shall not be tabulated as specified, and provided a penalty in Wyoming. ([Appendix 11-03](#)).

26LSO-0043 – Random hand count audits of election results, which would require a hand count audit of ballots in Wyoming. ([Appendix 11-04](#)).

26LSO-0044 – Elections – hand counting for recounts, which would provide a process for certain recounts to be conducted by hand counting the votes in Wyoming. ([Appendix 11-05](#)).

26LSO-0045 – Poll watchers – polling stations observation, which would amend the appointment and authority of poll watchers in Wyoming. ([Appendix 11-06](#)).

26LSO-0046 – Elections – independent candidate requirements, which would require independent candidates to swear that they are unaffiliated and not registered with a political party and revise the number of signatures required for independent candidates to appear on the general election ballot in Wyoming. ([Appendix 11-07](#)).

26LSO-0047 – Elections – voting machine and voting system tests, which would clarify the procedure for testing voting machines and electronic voting systems, and that tests are open to the public in Wyoming. ([Appendix 11-08](#)).

26LSO-0048 – Elections – acceptable identification revisions, which would require that acceptable identification include a photograph of the person and would repeal school identification cards, Medicaid/Medicare cards as forms of acceptable identification in Wyoming. ([Appendix 11-09](#)).

26LSO-0049 – Election transparency, which would require paper ballots, automatic tabulation of paper ballots, provide access for certain recounts to be conducted by hand counting, revise the time that absentee polling places may be open, revise dates of the primary election and the county and state canvass to allow time for hand counting in Wyoming. ([Appendix 11-10](#))

26LSO-0050 – Elections – voter registration revisions, which would clarify they definition of “qualified elector” in Wyoming. ([Appendix 11-11](#)).

Secretary of State's Office

Chuck Gray, Wyoming Secretary of State (SoS) and Joe Rubino, Deputy Secretary, addressed and spoke in support of the first three bills listed above (26LSO-0040, 26LSO-0041, and 26LSO-0042).

Wyoming County Clerks

Julie Freese, Fremont County Clerk; Malcolm Ervin, Platte County Clerk and Wyoming County Clerks' Association (WCCA), Maureen Murphy, Teton County Clerk; and Mary Lankford (WCCA) testified regarding the process, logistics and timelines of the election process.

Public Comment

The following people provided comments:

- Bill Winney, Sublette County
- Former Representative Sandy Newsome, Cody
- Tom Lacock, AARP
- Gail Symons, Civics 307, Sheridan
- Jenny DeSarro, Equality State Policy Center (ESPC)
- Larry French, Powell
- Joey Correnti, Carbon County
- Jill Kaufman, Platte County
- Bryan Miller, Sheridan County
- Karl Allred, Uinta County
- Janet Mader, Campbell County
- John Wilcox, Sheridan
- Linda Barton, League of Women Voters
- Former Representative Jon Conrad, Mountain View
- Marguerite Herman, League of Women Voters, Cheyenne.

Committee Action

The Committee voted to sponsor 26LSO-0040.2 – Pen and paper ballots as a Committee bill for the next legislative session. The motion passed on a roll call vote with all members voting in favor of the motion except Representative Yin and Co-Chairman Case who voted against the motion. The Committee adopted the following amendment:

Page 5-line 4 Change the effective date to make the bill effective immediately.

The Committee voted to sponsor 26LSO-0042.5 – Ballot harvesting-prohibition as a Committee bill for the next session. The motion passed on a roll call vote with all members voting in favor of the motion except Representative Yin, Senator Landen and Co-Chairman Case who voted against the motion. The Committee adopted the following amendments:

Page 2-line 18	Delete "an absentee ballot" and insert "absentee ballots"; delete "a qualified elector" and insert "not more than five (5) qualified electors".
Page 3-line 6	After "transmit" insert "copies of".
Page 3-line 17	Delete "may" and insert "shall".
Page 4-line 28	Change the effective date to make the bill effective immediately.

The Committee voted to sponsor 26LSO-0050.3 Elections-voter registration revisions during the next session. The motion passed on a roll call vote with all members voting in favor of the motion with the following amendment:

Page 6-line 9 Change the effective date to June 1, 2026

The Committee voted to move consideration of the remaining elections bills until the November 3-4, 2025, meeting.

OPPORTUNITY ZONES - REGULATORY SANDBOXES

Previous Bill Review

Senator Boner provided an overview of the general regulatory sandbox program and previous legislation. **(Appendix 13-01)(Appendix 13-02)**. Senator Boner explained the premise of a regulatory sandbox is to allow individuals or organizations to apply to the Wyoming Business Council to waive certain regulations in conjunction with oversight agencies and consumers in certain industries to inspire innovation. Senator Boner referenced previously introduced bills outlining the program and explained that the difference between the previously proposed draft bills is the timeframe for the entity being part of the regulatory sandbox (1 year with extension versus 2 years with extension).

Additional Committee Requests

The Committee requested a bill draft to amend language in W.S. 22-4-101 as suggested in **Appendix 11-12**.

MEETING ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Co-Chairman Knapp adjourned the meeting at 3:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Representative Christopher Knapp, C-Chairman

Committee Meeting Materials Index

Index Number	Agenda Item	Document Description	Document Provider
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1-02		Sign-In Sheet	Legislative Service Office
1-03	Call to Order	May 8-9, 2025 Minutes	Legislative Service Office
2-01	Energy Authority - Electricity Working Group Update	SB0132-Utah	Wyoming Energy Authority
2-02	Energy Authority - Electricity Working Group Update	WEA Update	Wyoming Energy Authority
3-01	Public Records Follow-Up and Open Meetings	LSO-Fact Sheet - WPRA-WPMA Penalties	Legislative Service Office
3-02	Public Records Follow-Up and Open Meetings	26LSO-0051 v0.4 Public records act revisions.	LSO
3-03	Public Records Follow-Up and Open Meetings	Public Records Ombudsman Response to Draft	Wyoming Public Records Ombudsman Darlena Potter
3-04	Public Records Follow-Up and Open Meetings	LSO Memo-Neighboring States Public Meeting Act	Legislative Service Office
3-05	Public Records Follow-Up and Open Meetings	26LSO-0052 v0.5 Public records act applicability to government associations.	LSO
3-06	Public Records Follow-Up and Open Meetings	Tom Lubnau Comments	Tom Lubnau - Public Comment
5-01	Housing	WCDA Housing Needs Assessment-Plan	Wyoming Community Development Authority
7-01	Uniform Law Commission - Uniform Mortgage Modifications Act	26LSO-0150 v0.4 Uniform mortgage modification act.	LSO

8-01	Elected Official Associations	LSO Fact Sheet Public Funding of Government Association Dues	Legislative Service Office
8-02	Elected Official Associations	2021 SF0144 Public funds-lobbying.	Legislative Service Office
11-01	Elections	26LSO-0040 v0.2 Pen and paper ballots.	LSO
11-02	Elections	26LSO-0041 v0.2 Ballot drop boxes-prohibition.	LSO
11-03	Elections	26LSO-0042 v0.2 Ballot harvesting-prohibition.	LSO
11-04	Elections	26LSO-0043 v0.2 Random hand count audits of election results.	LSO
11-05	Elections	26LSO-0044 v0.3 Elections-hand counting for recounts.	LSO
11-06	Elections	26LSO-0045 v0.2 Poll watchers-polling stations observation.	LSO
11-07	Elections	26LSO-0046 v0.2 Elections-independent candidate requirements.	LSO
11-08	Elections	26LSO-0047 v0.2 Elections-voting machine and voting system tests.	LSO
11-09	Elections	26LSO-0048 v0.2 Elections-acceptable identification revisions.	LSO
11-10	Elections	26LSO-0049 v0.3 Election transparency.	LSO
11-11	Elections	26LSO-0050 v0.3 Elections-voter registration revisions.	LSO
11-12	Elections	Title 22 - Proposed Amendment	Representative Webber
13-01	Opportunity Zones - Regulatory Sandboxes	2022 HB0135-General regulatory sandbox program.	Legislative Service Office
13-02	Opportunity Zones - Regulatory Sandboxes	2023 HB0214-General regulatory sandbox program.	Legislative Service Office